

ARCHITECTURAL AND OTHER NEWS
IN IRELAND.

The foundation-stone of a new town-hall was laid at Portadown last month.

A new custom-house is to be erected at Belfast, on the site now occupied by the harbour-office. The proposed building will contain offices for post-office and excise purposes.

The Commissioners of Public Works have expended, up to the present time, on the Ferban drainage, a sum of 29,751*l.*, and a sum of 27,315*l.* is required to complete it, although the original estimate was only 47,000*l.*

The foundation-stone of a new Roman Catholic church has been laid at Ballinroke.

Sundry works, consisting of the erection of a new board-room, &c. are being executed at the workhouse of Abbeyfeix, under the direction of the Poor-law Commissioners' architect.

The restoration of the cathedral of St. Canice, at Kilkenny, is progressing. The four great pillars and arches supporting the belfry tower are being re-decorated, and the whitewash with which they were covered for nearly two centuries is being removed: several other restorations are being effected.

The line between Strabane and Newtown-stewart, on the Londonderry and Enniskillen Railway, is in a forward state, and the works are expected to be shortly complete.

The parish church of Grean is being enlarged, and a new church is to be erected in the parish of Doon.

A new Presbyterian church is to be built at Belfast, on the Crumlin road.

The Committee of Natural History of the Royal Dublin Society advertised "the muni-ficent" premium of ten guineas to be given for the best set of plans for a building, containing extended museum accommodation, and to cost 2,500*l.* Although several designs were received by them for the same on the 1st of "May" last, no decision has been yet come to.

The exhibition of the Royal Hibernian Academy at Dublin has been open since July. The collection of paintings is far inferior in number to the preceding years. In the antique room the display of sculpture is greatly improved. The architectural drawings are extremely limited, and display few of any importance. The exhibition is now open to the working classes at the reduced rate of one penny.

PALACES AND PARKS OPEN TO THE
PARISIAN PUBLIC.

We compile the following list from one given in the French journals, assenting at the same time to the belief that there is no other city in Europe so well provided with places for public amusement, recreation, and instruction,—terms which are nearly synonymous, or ought to be so.

Fontainebleau.—Palace built by Primatice, and the successive abode of Francis I., Henry IV., Louis XIV., Napoleon, &c.; possesses a gallery, park, &c.

Compiègne.—Palace built by Francis I., furnished by Napoleon. Great berceux in the park.

Amboise.—Once inhabited by Racine, Molière, Franklin, Helvétius, &c.

Chantilly.—Palace, park, theatre, &c.

La Malmaison.—Inhabited by Napoleon and Josephine, who established here hot-houses, celebrated in their time. It was here that our favourite *Hortensia* plants were first cultivated.

Marly.—Palace and park of Louis XIV. Famous water-works, where 225 sucking and forcing pumps reach the river and raise the water 167 metres above its level: aqueduct 1,000 metres long, leading the water to the Versailles water-works. Steam-pump raising the water 500 metres.

Maison-aux-Scieries.—Built by Mauvart, with a collection of curiosities of the times of Charles IX. It belonged successively to Napoleon, Lamour, and Lafitte, the latter of whom converted the park into a *village-mo-dèle* (model village for the working classes). Distance, twenty-five minutes from Paris.

Montmorency.—The finest forest-park near Paris. J. J. Rousseau lived and wrote here.

Meudon.—Palace built by Philibert de Lormes, renovated by Louis XIV. Immense terrace on the Seine, whence Paris and 186 villages are to be seen. Rabelais was parson of Meudon.

Saint Cloud.—Palace and park. Henry III. died here by the dagger of a monk. The palace is rich in art-works, the park most picturesque.

Sèvres.—Great manufactory of porcelain.

Versailles.—World-known; perhaps the finest ensemble of architecture and parking in the known world. The two smaller palaces of Trianon.

Sevres.—The garden of the ancient château built by Colbert.

Saint Germain.—Ruins of the *Château Neuf*, built by Henry IV.: James II. of England died there; since Louis le Gros the abode of thirty kings and queens of diverse names. The ancient buildings are interesting specimens of the art-style of six centuries.

Le Mont Valérien.—One of the oldest sites of Paris, probably built on before the Christian Era.

Rembouillet.—The ancient château with its fine high tower: here died Francis I.: park and gardens laid out by Le Nôtre.

Neuilly.—Ruins of the Orleans palaces, &c.

Miscellanea.

CASTING IRON PIPES.—The *Glasgow Mail* notices the mode of casting pipes in use at the foundry of Messrs. D. Y. Stewart and Co. of St. Rollox. The writer says that the foundry turns out twenty pipes in a day, each 12 feet long and 44 inches bore. With the exception of drying, the whole process of moulding and casting is gone through in half an hour. The malleable iron case, on its railway carriage, is placed under the moulding machine: the pipe is completely moulded in a period of three minutes—the faucet formed, and the running number impressed: the whole is then transferred to the hot air stove, thence carried round to the cupola, where the core is inserted, and the molten metal, at a delicately determined degree of temperature, is introduced from an enormous cauldron, suspended from a powerful crane. While the metal is being poured in, myriads of the most brilliant and fantastic scintillations are often evolved. Immediately afterwards, and at the critical moment of incipient contraction and setting of the metal, the core is started by means of a hydraulic press, and the huge tube, every part of which is of equal thickness and strength, is carried away and deposited in the yard for cooling, dressing, and testing. Some portion of the process—the writer does not state what—is the invention of the managing partner.

MATERIALS OF OLD HOUSE OF COMMONS.—Messrs. Eversfield and Horne, as will have been seen from the daily newspapers, have had the selling of the materials and fittings of the old House of Commons, the Painted Chamber, &c. The whole product was 1,782*l.* It may be of interest to note a few of the particulars. The Portland stone, ashlar, cornice, string course, dressings, &c., of the building, corner of St. Margaret-street, up to a mark, including two windows with Ionic columns, brought 39*l.* The copper flat, 850 feet superficial, in the offices facing Old Palace-yard, 42*l.* The open panel ceiling of the House of Commons, 11*l.* The wainscot canopy for the Speaker's chair, 10*l.* The brick and stone-work of the north side and ends of the Painted Chamber and arches under, including several ancient Gothic stone windows, 50*l.*

THE WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD.—The dangerous state of the carriage-way near the foot of Westminster-bridge, on the Surrey side, occasioned by the breaking in of an old sewer, a few weeks since, has been made good. The loose soil has been withdrawn, and the aperture filled in with rubbish and concrete. The course of the drain has been diverted, so as to form a junction with the recently-constructed sewer which intersects the Westminster-road from Stangate-street across to Pedlar's-acre.

SCRAPERS AND SIGNS.—There is a subject that time after time I have intended to write to you about, hoping you would give it your influence to set it to rights. The subject is foot or shoe-scrapers; you see I do not soar very high in my cogitations. Being also a little short-sighted, my meditations on the subject lead me to bless these foot-scrapers a thousand times, the more so that I know there is a remedy for the evil. When recently in Hamburg, I was delighted with the substitute they have there for the really inefficient, after a little use, and dangerous thing they have in this country. At each end of the door-step, and on a level with it, they have a grating, which not only is far more serviceable, but allows the dirt to fall through into a convenient space opening to the front, cut out on purpose, and which admits of its daily and easy removal. There is another subject I also think might suggest a passing observation from you. I regret it is not much more elevated than the other. I allude to sign-boards, that is, as far as they refer to the numerous large new buildings being run up in all directions for offices. Sometimes the builder leaves a narrow space for the names of the occupiers, or a board is put up for this purpose, but it is almost always so narrow that there is no room for making a separate column for designations: even when the name is long, it has to occupy two lines. Now we keep our books as much as possible on the column principle, to save time and trouble, and I do not see why it should not be the same with signs or sign-boards. Names and designations are often so jumbled together in a long list, that it is difficult and time-consuming to find out a required address. This, however, is a small matter compared to the foot-scraper: I do hope you will give them a kick off the face of the earth.—A LIVERPOLIAN.

METROPOLITAN COMMISSION OF SEWERS.—A special court was held on Friday, in last week; Mr. E. Lawes in the chair, and Mr. R. Stephenson, Captain Dawson, and Mr. Rendell, commissioners, also present. The chairman stated, that a great number of applications and memorials had been presented, from which he had made a selection; the first of which to be brought under notice was a memorial, complaining of the nuisance from an open sewer at Temple Bar Pier, and requesting that it might be arched over. The proprietors of the Chinese Junk had also memorialised them to the same effect. A discussion then ensued as to the propriety of covering the sewer to low-water mark, which Mr. Stephenson and Mr. Rendell recommended, Captain Dawson suggesting a special rate to defray the expense. The chairman stated that the sewer drained a whole district, and that the district rates were liable to the cost. The surveyor, he said, had reported that this was not so great a nuisance as many of the other outlets to the Thames. He was of opinion that if covered over, the expense would be thrown away as soon as the general plan of drainage was adopted. The estimate for covering over the sewer with plank would be about 450*l.* Mr. Rendell and Mr. Stephenson thought the propriety of incurring the expense would depend upon the time the nuisance would be likely to be endured. If the prospect of the adoption of the general plan was distant, it might be expedient to abate a great nuisance in the meantime. The matter was ordered to be further reported on at next court. Some other complaints were then heard and works ordered, warrants signed, and rates of 3*d.* in the pound on the Wandie, Fulham, and Hammermith districts ordered.

WEST SUFFOLK ARCHEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.—On Thursday week, the members and friends of this society paid a visit to Ely Cathedral. The attendance consisted principally of the clergy and their families from Suffolk: there were not many members present from Cambridge. The Very Rev. the Dean, and the architect, attended the party from the nave to the lantern, and through the cathedral, explaining to the visitors every object of antiquarian and general interest, and the late improvements made in the edifice. In the afternoon the palace was thrown open, and the bishop presided at dinner.